

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 13-2V

Filed: September 19, 2014

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
MELODY CLOWSER, *
Petitioner, *
v. *
SECRETARY OF HEALTH *
AND HUMAN SERVICES, *
Respondent. *
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
UNPUBLISHED
Special Master Hamilton-Fieldman
Joint Stipulation on Damages;
Influenza (“Flu”) Vaccine;
Guillain-Barré Syndrome (“GBS”).

Danielle Strait, Maglio, Christopher and Toale, PA, Washington, D.C., for Petitioner.
Darryl R. Wishard, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., for Respondent.

DECISION¹

On January 2, 2013, Melody Clowser (“Petitioner”) filed a petition pursuant to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.² 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2006). Petitioner alleged that she suffered from Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”) as a result of an influenza (“flu”) vaccine administered to her on February 4, 2011. *See* Petition at 1-2.

On September 19, 2014, the parties filed a stipulation in which they stated that a decision should be entered awarding compensation.

¹ Because this decision contains a reasoned explanation for the undersigned's action in this case, the undersigned intends to post this ruling on the website of the United States Court of Federal Claims, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-347, § 205, 116 Stat. 2899, 2913 (codified as amended at 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2006)). As provided by Vaccine Rule 18(b), each party has 14 days within which to request redaction "of any information furnished by that party: (1) that is a trade secret or commercial or financial in substance and is privileged or confidential; or (2) that includes medical files or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy." Vaccine Rule 18(b).

² The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program is set forth in Part 2 of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755, codified as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2006) (Vaccine Act or the Act). All citations in this decision to individual sections of the Vaccine Act are to 42 U.S.C.A. § 300aa.

Respondent denies that the flu vaccine either caused or significantly aggravated Petitioner's GBS or any other injury, and denies that she experienced symptoms of GBS or any other injury for more than six months. Nevertheless, the parties agree to the joint stipulation, attached hereto as Appendix A. The undersigned finds the stipulation reasonable and adopts it as the decision of the Court in awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

The parties stipulated that petitioner shall receive the following compensation:

A lump sum of \$200,000.00 in the form of a check payable to Petitioner;

A lump sum of \$9,639.62, which amount represents compensation for reimbursement of a Medicaid lien, in the form of a check payable jointly to Petitioner and the State of Colorado, Department of Health Care Policy & Financing, ID # G648127. Petitioner agrees to endorse this payment to the Medicaid provider; and

A lump sum of \$2,007.87, which amount represents compensation for reimbursement of a Medicaid lien, in the form of a check payable jointly to Petitioner and the Colorado Health Partnership, ID # G648127. Petitioner agrees to endorse this payment to the Medicaid provider.

These amounts represent compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

Stipulation ¶ 8.

The undersigned approves the requested amount for Petitioner's compensation. Accordingly, an award should be made consistent with the stipulation.

In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the clerk of the court **SHALL ENTER JUDGMENT** in accordance with the terms of the parties' ³ stipulation.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/ Lisa Hamilton-Fieldman
Lisa Hamilton-Fieldman
Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment is expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

MELODY CLOWSER,)	
Petitioner,)	No. 13-2V ECF
v.)	Special Master Hamilton-Fieldman
SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,)	
Respondent.)	
)	

STIPULATION

The parties hereby stipulate to the following matters:

1. Petitioner, Melody Clowser, filed a petition for vaccine compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 to 34 (the "Vaccine Program"). The petition seeks compensation for injuries allegedly related to petitioner's receipt of the trivalent influenza ("flu") vaccine, which vaccine is contained in the Vaccine Injury Table (the "Table"), 42 C.F.R. § 100.3(a).
2. Petitioner received the flu vaccine on February 4, 2011.
3. The vaccine was administered within the United States.
4. Petitioner alleges that, as a result of receiving the flu vaccine, she suffered from Guillain-Barre syndrome ("GBS"), and that she experienced symptoms of GBS for more than six months.
5. Petitioner represents that there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action for damages as a result of this injury.

6. Respondent denies that the flu vaccine either caused or significantly aggravated petitioner's GBS or any other injury, and denies that she experienced symptoms of GBS or any other injury for more than six months.

7. Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding the compensation described in paragraph 8 of this Stipulation.

8. As soon as practicable after an entry of judgment reflecting a decision consistent with the terms of this Stipulation, and after petitioner has filed an election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services will issue the following vaccine compensation payments:

- a. A lump sum of \$200,000.00 in the form of a check payable to petitioner.
- b. A lump sum of \$ 9,639.62, which amount represents compensation for reimbursement of a Medicaid lien, in the form of a check payable jointly to petitioner and the State of Colorado, Department of Health Care Policy & Financing, ID# G648127. Petitioner agrees to endorse this payment to the Medicaid provider.
- c. A lump sum of \$2,007.87, which amount represents compensation for reimbursement of a Medicaid lien, in the form of a check payable jointly to petitioner and the Colorado Health Partnership, ID# G648127. Petitioner agrees to endorse this payment to the Medicaid provider.

The above amounts represent compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

9. As soon as practicable after the entry of judgment on entitlement in this case, and after petitioner has filed both a proper and timely election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), and an application, the parties will submit to further proceedings before the special master to award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in proceeding

upon this petition.

10. Petitioner and her attorney represent that compensation to be provided pursuant to this Stipulation is not for any items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), to the extent that payment has been made or can reasonably be expected to be made under any State compensation programs, insurance policies, Federal or State health benefits programs (other than Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.)), or by entities that provide health services on a pre-paid basis.

11. Payments made pursuant to paragraph 8 of this Stipulation, and any amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 9 of this Stipulation, will be made in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(i), subject to the availability of sufficient statutory funds.

12. The parties and their attorneys further agree and stipulate that, except for any award for attorneys' fees and litigation costs, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation will be used solely for the benefit of petitioner, as contemplated by a strict construction of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a) and (d), and subject to the conditions of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g) and (h).

13. In return for the payments described in paragraphs 8 and 9, petitioner, in her individual capacity and on behalf of her heirs, executors, administrators, successors or assigns, does forever irrevocably and unconditionally release, acquit and discharge the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services from any and all actions, causes of action (including agreements, judgments, claims, damages, loss of services, expenses and all demands of whatever kind or nature) that have been brought, could have been brought, or could be timely brought in the Court of Federal Claims, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 et seq., on account of, or in any way growing out of, any and all known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected personal injuries to or death of petitioner resulting from, or

alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccine administered on February 4, 2011, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about January 2, 2013, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 13-2V.

14. If petitioner should die prior to entry of judgment, this agreement shall be voidable upon proper notice to the Court on behalf of either or both of the parties.

15. If the special master fails to issue a decision in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation or if the Court of Federal Claims fails to enter judgment in conformity with a decision that is in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation, then the parties' settlement and this Stipulation shall be voidable at the sole discretion of either party.

16. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, *as amended*, except as otherwise noted in paragraph 9 above. There is absolutely no agreement on the part of the parties hereto to make any payment or to do any act or thing other than is herein expressly stated and clearly agreed to. The parties further agree and understand that the award described in this stipulation may reflect a compromise of the parties' respective positions as to liability and/or amount of damages, and further, that a change in the nature of the injury or condition or in the items of compensation sought, is not grounds to modify or revise this agreement.

17. This Stipulation shall not be construed as an admission by the United States or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that the flu vaccine either caused or significantly aggravated petitioner's alleged injury or any other injury.

18. All rights and obligations of petitioner hereunder shall apply equally to petitioner's heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and/or assigns.

END OF STIPULATION

Respectfully submitted,

PETITIONER:

Melody Clowser
MELODY CLOWSER

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
PETITIONER:**

DANIELLE A. STRAIT

DANIELLE A. STRAIT
Maglio, Christopher & Toale, PA
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004
888-952-5242

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES:**

A. MELISSA HOUSTON
A. MELISSA HOUSTON, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP
Acting Director, Division of Vaccine
Injury Compensation (VICC)
Acting Director, Countermeasures Injury
Compensation Program (CICP)
Healthcare Systems Bureau
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Parklawn Building, Mail Stop 11C-26

Dated: 9/10/14

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:**

Vincent J. Matanosa

VINCENT J. MATANOSKI
Deputy Director
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
RESPONDENT:**

Darryl R. Wishard

DARRYL R. WISHARD
Trial Attorney
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146
(202) 616-4357